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WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESS OFFICE, SIT ROOM  
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TAGS: [IS](#) [KMDR](#) [MEDIA](#) [REACTION](#) [REPORT](#)  
SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

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SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:  
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- [1](#). Mideast
- [2](#). Global War on Terrorism

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Key stories in the media:  
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Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz was quoted as saying, in a bannered interview with Yediot, that Israel will pull out from the Philadelphi route by the Jewish New Year (early October). Mofaz made similar remarks in comments he made on Israel TV last night. Yediot also reported that the IDF has restricted conditions for Israelis' entry into the Gaza Strip, allowing it only for the settlers' next of kin. Ha'aretz and Israel Radio reported that Mofaz and PA Civil Affairs Minister Muhammad Dahlan met on Tuesday. Ha'aretz quoted Israeli security sources as saying that the two made progress. Ha'aretz reported that the two men agreed to establish two joint teams that would deal with the checkpoints; one would focus on improving the current checkpoint situation and the other would discuss how they would be controlled in the future. The radio quoted Dahlan as saying that the talks were held in a positive atmosphere, and that Israel has okayed the construction of a seaport in Gaza. The station reported that Mofaz insisted on security quiet, and on there being no firing during the disengagement.

Ha'aretz reported that the U.S. administration has refused to rescind sanctions against Israel until the latter proves it has increased its monitoring of security-related exports, deepening the crisis between the two countries. The newspaper added that the U.S. demands that Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz join an apology with his signature to the memorandum of understanding to be signed between the two countries. Ha'aretz reported that Mofaz, who was about to leave for Washington for talks on the matter, canceled the trip following the increased U.S. demands.

Jerusalem Post quoted an official close to Sharon as saying on Tuesday, on his plane en route to Paris, that Israel will not agree to hold an international summit on advancing the post-disengagement diplomatic process until after the first stage of the road map.

All media reported that a "pulsa denura" ceremony against Sharon was held last Thursday in the old cemetery of the Galilee town of Rosh Pina. Channel 2-TV will tonight broadcast a recording of the event, a part of which it aired last night. The "pulsa denura" is commonly considered the most severe of kabalistic curses, and is meant to cause its subject's death within the year. The media recall that such a rite was held against the late PM Yitzhak Rabin shortly before his assassination. All media reported that on Tuesday, Justice Minister Tzipi Livni ordered the state-employed rabbi of Kiryat Motzkin (near Haifa), David Meir Drukman, to be placed before a disciplinary court for calling on disengagement opponents to break the law to prevent implementation of the plan. Israel Radio cited an announcement by the Yesha Council of Jewish Settlements in the Territories that it will hold a mass rally in Sderot next Tuesday and prepare for a long stay there in order to paralyze the security forces ahead of the disengagement.

Israel Radio and the leading Internet news site Ynet

quoted PA Chairman [President] Mahmoud Abbas as saying in an interview with the UAE-based newspaper Al-Khaleej that he rejects the idea of the Gaza Strip turning into a large prison that would not be sufficiently open to the outside world. Abbas was also quoted as saying that he is not confident that Sharon wants peace.

Israel Radio quoted Quartet representative James Wolfensohn as saying before a congressional committee in Washington that there has been some progress in contacts regarding the evacuation of the rubble of settlers' houses from the Gaza Strip, that both Israel and the Palestinians are interested in the rubble being moved to Egypt, and that there are commercial negotiations with Egypt on the matter. The station also quoted him as saying that, were harmful material to be extracted from the rubble, the rest could be used for construction in the PA, and only a small part of the materials would be transferred to Egypt.

Yediot's article featuring Richard Jones, whom President Bush nominated as ambassador to Israel on Monday, is entitled "Whisperer to Condoleezza." Jerusalem Post focused on controversies that surrounded Jones during his terms as ambassador in Lebanon and Kuwait.

Ha'aretz and other media quoted Shin Bet head Yuval Diskin as saying on Tuesday, before the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, that the PA's ability to impose law and order is negligible, while terror groups such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad see no reason to stop attacks on Israel during the disengagement. Diskin was also quoted as saying that terror may shift to the West Bank after the disengagement. Maariv quoted senior IDF officers as saying, during a visit by Mofaz and Chief of Staff Dan Halutz to the IDF's Gaza Strip divisional headquarters, that there will be no choice but to carry out a large-scale military operation in the Gaza Strip to prevent Palestinian attacks during disengagement. Jerusalem Post reported that on Tuesday, Palestinian PM Ahmed Qurei rejected Sharon's warning that Israel would respond harshly to terrorist attacks during disengagement.

Jerusalem Post reported that the Foreign Ministry is looking for new ways to ensure that Hizbullah's inclusion into the Lebanese government does not win it greater international legitimacy. The newspaper said that Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice "provided cover for this approach" during her contacts in Beirut on Friday.

Leading media reported that British PM Tony Blair and Foreign Secretary Jack Straw have expressed reservations about London Mayor Ken Livingstone's diatribe against Israel.

Ha'aretz cited a report made public on Tuesday by the Strategic Assessment Initiative, a Washington-based NGO, according to which "reform of the PA security sector is a prerequisite for the success of the implementation of the road map." The report also states, "Coordinated third-party assistance in the field of security services reform will be a critical success factor."

Maariv and other media reported that the Iraqi constitution, which is being drafted, includes a paragraph meant to prevent the granting of Iraqi citizenship to most Iraq-born Jews.

Yediot and Israel Radio reported that Tuesday's editorial in Jutland Posten, Denmark's largest circulation newspaper, was entitled "We Are All Israelis." The Danish daily expressed its regret over criticism leveled by the West on the way Israel has fought terror. Yediot reported that on Tuesday, the French daily Le Monde front-paged a caricature featuring Sharon as a dove.

All media (lead stories in Maariv and Israel Radio) prominently reported that today, Attorney-General Menachem Mazuz will indict PM Sharon's son, Knesset Member Omri Sharon, for flouting campaign finance laws, forging corporate documents, perjury, and breach of trust. In what has been dubbed the "straw companies affairs," MK Sharon is alleged to have committed the offenses first during PM Sharon's campaign for Likud leadership, and later when Ariel Sharon ran for PM. The media say that, if convicted, Omri Sharon could be jailed for up to five years. Yediot and Israel Radio reported that on Tuesday, Omri Sharon asked that his parliamentary immunity be removed.

Citing Reuters, Maariv quoted Bob Baker, senior VP of the American computer giant Intel, as saying on Tuesday that his company has made no decisions regarding the expansion of its activities in Israel. The media had quoted Sharon as saying early this week that the company would invest USD 4 billion in the country.

Yediot features Miri Chen, the Israeli girlfriend of Discovery space shuttle crewmember Steve Robinson.

Ha'aretz published the results of a Peace Now poll conducted by Market Watch among residents of West Bank settlements that are not slated for evacuation. The question was whether to build new settlements.  
-51.3 percent of secular settlers among those surveyed said that such construction should be avoided; 42.7 percent said it should be continued.  
-35.2 percent of traditional settlers among those surveyed said that such construction should be avoided; 58.1 percent said it should be continued.  
-7.5 percent of Orthodox settlers among those surveyed said that such construction should be avoided; 86.6 percent said it should be continued.  
-25.4 percent of ultra-Orthodox settlers among those surveyed said that such construction should be avoided; 66.7 percent said it should be continued.

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[1](#)1. Mideast:  
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Summary:  
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Israel's Ambassador to the U.S. Daniel Ayalon wrote in conservative, independent Jerusalem Post: "Israel has shown it is prepared to take difficult steps to achieve President Bush's vision for peace in the Middle East. The world should insist on no less from the Palestinians."

Veteran op-ed writer and the late prime minister Yitzhak Rabin's assistant Eytan Haber opined in the lead editorial of mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot: "Israel cannot afford a second assassination of a prime minister. Therefore, with all due respect to the rabbinic world ... it is time -- there is no other choice -- to take off the gloves."

Editor-in-Chief Amnon Dankner wrote on page one of popular, pluralist Maariv: "While it is true that one could argue that a ceremony of this kind expresses the reckless will of one oddball or another to see the prime minister die ... the truth is that this entire issue is merely a summer show for thirsty and generous media."

Senior op-ed writer Uzi Benziman commented in independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz: "[Settler leaders] pay lip service to the principle of non-violent struggle, but in fact they are preparing for a bellicose fight with the declared goal of forcing their stand on others."

Block Quotes:  
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[1](#)I. "Jump-Starting the Peace Process"

Israel's Ambassador to the U.S. Daniel Ayalon wrote in conservative, independent Jerusalem Post (July 27): "Prime Minister Ariel Sharon is boldly determined to move forward with disengagement from Gaza and the northern West Bank, out of a deep conviction that it is critical to Israel's future. Unfortunately, the Palestinian leadership has failed to meet him halfway.... Time is running out for the Palestinian leadership to confront the terrorists. Should it fail to do so, Israel will be forced to take the necessary steps to defend its people: lest the Palestinians miss another historic opportunity, the world should insist that they crack down on terrorism now.... Disengagement is an immense political, strategic, and indeed historic undertaking, aimed at reducing friction between Israelis and Palestinians, jump-starting the peace process and providing the Palestinians with a unique opportunity to build institutions of responsible self-governance.... [Also], the trauma of disengagement has opened up dangerous rifts in Israeli society.... At stake is not only the success of disengagement but also the very fabric of Israeli society.... The notion of disengagement would have been unthinkable had Israel not prevailed in the latest round of sustained terrorism waged by the Palestinians since September [1](#)2000. The stakes for Israel are enormous. We are a strong but small country facing a largely hostile region roughly 500 times our size. We can ill afford

to make mistakes. Israel has shown it is prepared to take difficult steps to achieve President Bush's vision for peace in the Middle East. The world should insist on no less from the Palestinians."

## II. "Put the Rogue Rabbis in Their Place"

Veteran op-ed writer and the late prime minister Yitzhak Rabin's assistant Eytan Haber opined in the lead editorial of mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot (July 27): "The custom in Israel has always been to uphold the dignity of rabbis.... Lately, in light of what is happening in the disengagement plan, rabbis have arisen ... who speak in favor of a 'pulsa denura,' which is generally agreed to mean issuing a death sentence against the prime minister. So we learned from the assassination of prime minister Yitzhak Rabin. The matter of the 'pulsa denura' is utter nonsense.... The question that should be examined is whether these statements have the potential to lead one or more fools and idiots to harm high placed officials in the State of Israel. The answer is: Yes. Israel cannot afford a second assassination of a prime minister. Therefore, with all due respect to the rabbinic world and with all due regret, it is time -- there is no other choice -- to take off the gloves.... Direct or indirect calls to murder the prime minister should meet with squads of police officers who will round up the rabbis calling for murder, like the worst of scoundrels, push them into the paddy wagon and lead them to Lysol-scented cells."

## III. "Pulsa Deshmulsa"

Editor-in-Chief Amnon Dankner wrote on page one of popular, pluralist Maariv (July 27): "This entire issue of a 'pulsa denura' [kabalistic death curse] oughtn't elicit more than a shrug of the shoulders and a snigger of ridicule, since it is taken seriously only by a few eccentrics who, by the bye, want to make a bit of cash on the side.... We would best bear in mind that Yigal Amir did not stand with a talith [prayer shawl] in a graveyard at night and recite pseudo-magical texts; he oiled a gun and collected bullets. While it is true that one could argue that a ceremony of this kind expresses the reckless will of one oddball or another to see the prime minister die, and perhaps creates somewhere a tiny wave of a murderous atmosphere, the truth is that this entire issue is merely a summer show for thirsty and generous media, that was produced by a group of people who would put the money they received from the television program to best use by getting some psychological counseling."

## IV. "He Had a Dream"

Senior op-ed writer Uzi Benziman commented in independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz (July 27): "Pinchas Wallerstein, the militant leader of the settlers' anti-disengagement protest, went out on a limb when he tried to compare the right-wing demonstrators' attempted invasion of Gush Katif last week to human rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr.'s freedom march on Washington D.C.... He spoke out against violence.... One of King's main messages was the shared destiny of the American people, and he spoke out against separatism and prejudice.... When we examine the message of Wallerstein and his friends, we meet an entirely different world of concepts and intent.... They pay lip service to the principle of non-violent struggle, but in fact they are preparing for a bellicose fight with the declared goal of forcing their stand on others.... Moreover, King's march was coordinated with the authorities; then-president John F. Kennedy welcomed it with a call for equality for all. The march to Gush Katif set out to break the law -- an attempt that did not succeed."

## 12. Global War on Terrorism:

### Summary:

Jerusalem Post editorialized: "Condemning terrorism ought to be a simple matter for the leader of the Catholic Church."

### Block Quotes:

"A Papal Omission"

Jerusalem Post editorialized (July 27): "Condemning

terrorism ought to be a simple matter for the leader of the Catholic Church. Yet on Sunday, when Pope Benedictus XVI condemned recent terrorist atrocities in Britain, Egypt, Iraq and Turkey, conspicuously absent from the papal list was the renewed terrorism in Israel.... The inclination, subliminally or otherwise, to isolate Jews in a separate category, isn't unique to the Vatican. But we expected better of a just-installed pontiff who has declared his desire to reach out to Jews and announced plans to visit the synagogue in Cologne during his upcoming journey to his native Germany. A pope, what is more, who was reportedly ready to take a tougher approach to the struggle with militant Islam than his predecessor. Sadly, however, it almost appears that Benedictus XVI is falling short even of Arab League Secretary-General Amr Moussa who has reportedly and at long last accepted the UN's draft definition of terror, one that brooks no exception making Israel a legitimate target. The Arab world has been aggressively sabotaging any UN attempt to at all agree on what terror is since 1996. The need to define terror received particular impetus after 9/11. UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan was finally forced to take

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on the Arab block. His terminology had emerged as the principal bone being thrown to Washington in response to its insistent demands for UN reform.... It's a step in the right direction, even if hesitant, even if the product of coercion, even if only following 9/11 (as if all which preceded it mattered less) and even that belatedly."  
KURTZER